

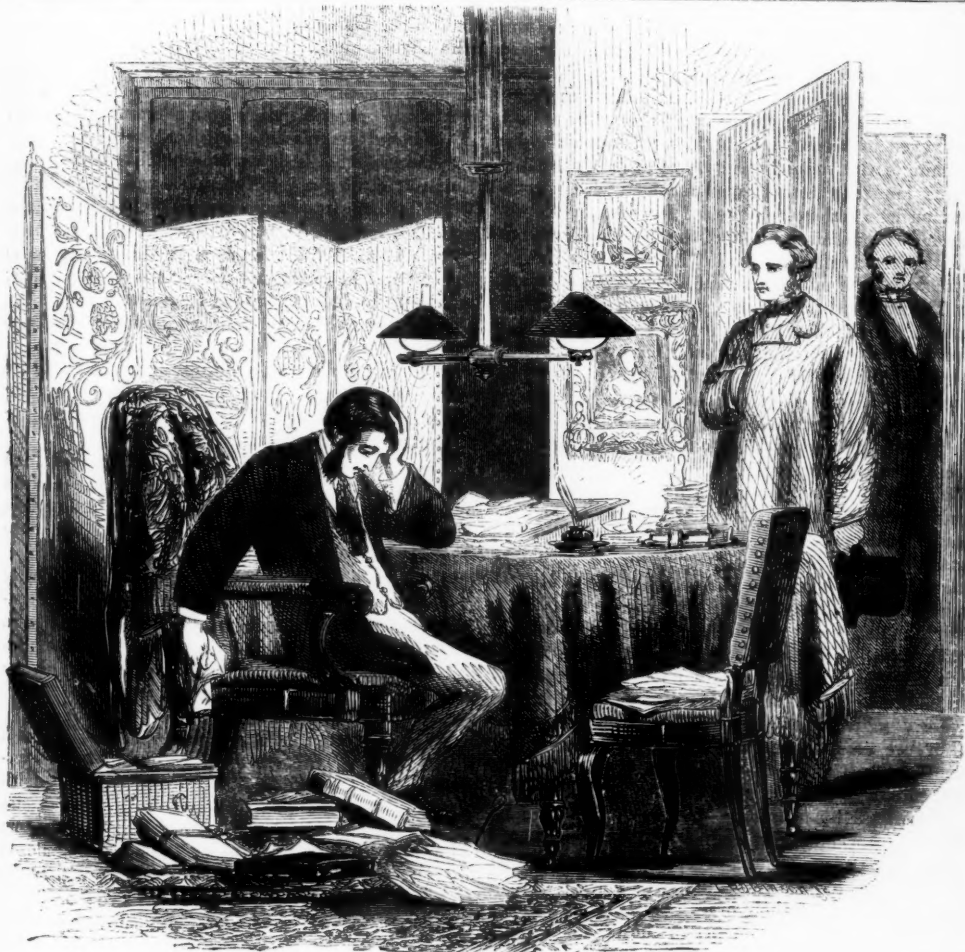
# THE LEISURE HOUR

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THE CATASTROPHE.

## GEOFFREY THE GENIUS, AND PERCY THE PLODDER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ARCHIE CAMPBELL."

### CHAPTER X.

Two years had rapidly and peacefully passed over the heads of our friends at Nestlebury and Darnley Mill, and the anniversary had again arrived of Percival's marriage, to celebrate which event, and their having recently become tenants of the old

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Manor House, a small circle of real friends had been invited by the young couple to dinner.

"Who would have thought that 'Percy the Plodder' would ever have come to live in the Manor House at Nestlebury!" said Uncle William, with a sort of sly exultation in his tone, as he and his sister drove up the well-remembered avenue; "and yet," he added in a thankful voice, "it is but just that 'he who climbs the tree should pluck the

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fruit.' Yes, Sussey, we may well be gratified with our boy's industry and energy, and grateful for the blessing which has been vouchsafed them from on high; and now our prayer must be that he and his dear little wife may not 'swell in prosperity,' lest, if a reverse await them in years to come, they should as surely 'shrink in adversity.'

The usual hearty welcome awaited the doting mother and indulgent uncle; and then kindly greetings were exchanged between the new-comers and Monsieur Gaubin and his daughter Adèle, a graceful, intelligent girl, who were resident guests for a few weeks. Mr. Montague and his wife and sister soon arrived, and were speedily followed by Dr. and Mrs. Markham. A hurried excuse from Geoffrey had left a seat vacant at the table. Jessie's womanly tact and kindness suggested a substitute in the foreign professor at Birchindale Academy; Percy delivered the invitation in person, which, conveyed with courtesy, and recognising his right to mingle with refined society, was at once accepted. Thus Monsieur Gaubin was provided with a companion who did not exasperate his ears by Anglo-French pronunciations, and the highly-gifted but oft-neglected stranger again luxuriated in the intercourse with cultivated minds and kindly hearts.

The conversation of the gentlemen, after dinner, turned on the topics of the day; amongst which were some painful disclosures, whereby the character for honesty and honour of some who had hitherto held high positions in the commercial world were likely to be sadly compromised.

"It is all owing to this fatal mania for speculation, which has so rapidly spread amongst us," said Uncle William: "scarcely a day now passes but brings particulars of its perilous increase and its augmenting victims. The biting sarcasm of the first Napoleon, that 'the English were a nation of shopkeepers,' might, in our own day, be carried to a still more galling and truthful comparison.

"But you would not forbid all speculation, or, in other words, all progress?" asked Mr. Montague; "if so, what impetus would be given to genius, industry, or invention? The railroads, for instance, were a mere speculation when first begun; now they are so necessary a part of our social intercourse, that the only source of wonder is, how we did so long without them."

"I would by no means discourage speculations which seem likely to confer real or permanent advantages on society," replied Mr. Belford; "men who invest their money to work out a grand creation of their brain, which in its results will bring enduring benefits to the world, are the benefactors of their fellows, and as such are entitled to respect and gratitude; and those who enter even a less extended field of honest enterprise, are quite justified in the hope and expectation of receiving a fair recompence for their labours. It is not of such that I speak in terms of reprobation. These are not 'speculators,' in the sense I mean; but those men who stake, not only their own money, but that intrusted to their charge, on the unhallowed chance of doubling or trebling that amount by tricks and quibbles, or by practising on the ignorance, folly, or credulity of others, are amongst

those whom God himself has denounced and disowned when He declares, 'All false ways I utterly abhor.'"

"You are warm on the subject, my good friend," rejoined Mr. Montague; "and I cannot but agree with you mainly, although I may differ from you on some minor points."

"Can you wonder that I am warm," returned Uncle William, "when such consequences follow from the conduct I deprecate? I blush for my countrymen when I read such remarks as met my eyes a few days back; the writer says: 'On the banks of the Danube, the Vistula, the Rhine, and the Tagus, on the shores of the Baltic and the Mediterranean, and on the plains of Poland, I have met with men who have asked me for charity, because they had been ruined by connection with some of the first English houses;' and these sad records, remember, come from one who speaks from personal knowledge of his countrymen's besetting sin."

"Your brother-in-law would not like to hear Mr. Belford's strong opinion against speculation," said Dr. Markham, *sotto voce*, to his young friend and quondam pupil.

"He has heard it often," he replied, in the same tone; "but he maintains the chase is a lawful one, and that he shall never be a loser therein."

"And you have no wish to emulate his swift career?" was the half-doubtful interrogatory.

"No, my dear sir; I am quite contented with my 'slow and steady' pace, and thankful for having thus far crept up the tree of fortune; for I was never meant for aught beyond a 'plodder.'"

Uncle William caught the half-jesting reply, and added his quaint remark: "Geoffrey the Genius has hitherto used his wings to some good purpose; but the time may come when he will find 'the highest branch is not always the safest roost!'"

Could the speaker have glanced immediately from his nephew's abode of competence and content, to that of the other hero of our tale, what a practical commentary would he have seen on his own words, and how might he have warningly exclaimed, in those of the poet,

"Look on this picture, and on this."

In a spacious room, furnished with all the lavish luxury of this luxurious age, wherein large pier-glasses in rich gilded frames gave back in multiplied profusion the wealth and dazzling elegance spread around, Geoffrey Armitage is striding up and down with restless hasty steps. He is alone; no wife's fond smile responds to playful wit, or the bright corruscations of intellectual fire; or if the brow be bent with thought or care, no gentle voice demands to share the sorrow or essays to chase the cloud. But though no auditor be nigh to hear his murmurs, and perchance to soothe them, his feelings must find vent in words, or he will choke. Thus, then, they flowed forth:—

"Things look most gloomy at this present time! What will be the end I cannot tell. All my speculations are turning out unprofitably. The foundations upon which I have reared my lofty pile of wealth seem shaking to their centre; and if they sink, I shall be buried in the ruins." He began slowly counting on his fingers. "First, there

are the two companies I helped to start: of one, the cashier has absconded with nearly all the paid-up capital; and the other is declared insolvent. The iron mine in S—shire produces more dross than ore, and the shares are at a discount. That last consignment from Valparaiso is a dead loss; and by holding those American railway bonds, I have lost thousands when I might have realized them.

He paused for a moment, cast a glance round the splendidly furnished room, and then resumed his speech and walk: "It would be hard to lose all these tangible proofs of the wealth for which I have toiled so hard and long; and yet, money must be raised, or I shall lose every chance I possess, for I have not enough in hand to meet coming responsibilities; and if my credit is impugned, my ruin must necessarily follow. That patent of 'the peat, candle, and fuel' must be worked, or my shares will be valueless. The results are very different to what M'Wheedle showed on paper; and if it is known that the company (which really consists of myself, M'Wheedle, Whitstraw, and Bounce) are selling their *own reserved* shares, the whole thing will be blown on at once, and then good-bye to selling even at par. The payment of those time bargains this morning was another heavy blow."

Again there was a pause, evidently of deep reflection, for his eyes were fixed upon the ground, and his lips moved as if in inward consultation. "Yes," he presently muttered, "that might do; start a few more 'race-horses of the Stock Exchange' at once, and they might reach the goal and win some golden prizes yet. I'll try to-morrow with one or two. Then there is Jessie's money; I must again remove it from its present investment; she, good little soul, never asks questions; so long as I send her the interest agreed on, she never troubles herself about the principal. 'Onward,' then, must still be my motto. 'Geoffrey the Genius' must not discredit his name by losing tact, confidence, and resources. To-morrow, then, I will play my men, so as to retrieve some of my late false moves."

And thus had passed the evening with Geoffrey Armitage, which was being so differently spent under the happy roof-tree of his unambitious brother-in-law and his young wife.

Some days passed by; a few good bargains, in which he had obtained advantage over men equally eager but less cunning than himself, renewed his confidence and gave fresh impulse to his exertions. "A splendid opportunity," as he called it, next tempted him with the usual bait of a large per centage for a few months' investment; but even after using Jessie's principal, ("only for a time," as he argued to his conscience,) some hundreds were still wanting to make up the sum required; his request, however, for three days' delay in the completion of the bargain was readily agreed to. That brief period proved to be an eventful one!

Some few weeks after their wedding dinner party, Percival Malcolm announced to his wife that he was obliged to go to London on business, and asked if she had any particular message to her brother, to whom he intended to become a voluntary guest for

one night at least. The sister's love had never waned, her confidence had never wavered, and she gave a message worthy of her own true loving heart. She and Percy had so long been accustomed to consider Geoffrey as immensely rich, that any notion of his needing their pecuniary assistance would as soon have occurred to her simple mind as that the Bank of England should ask it of them; and, confident in his honourable charge of her own little property, a question was now put to her husband, which she had talked over with Uncle William and received his approval of. It was, would he like the Manor House to become their own? and, if so, had she his permission to buy it of her brother with her own money, which, ever since she became of age, was entirely under her own control?

"Geoffrey will never care to live here himself," she said; "he has sometimes talked of selling it, and we should not like it to pass to strangers; so, now you are going to town, speak to him on the subject, and perhaps it can be arranged at once. Uncle William thinks that five thousand pounds is price enough, but if Geoffrey requires it, perhaps you will not grudge a round sum yourself towards the purchase."

The generous proposal was, after a short discussion, agreed to by the admiring husband, who next day left for London. Arriving late, he remained the night at an hotel, and next morning left very early to commence business, not even delaying to receive the "Times" from the hands of a monopolizing reader, who seemed particularly interested in its contents. He had various purchases to make for the factory at Darnley, which involved the necessity of calling at their London banker to cash a cheque for their payment; and as it had grown rather late in the afternoon, the merchants and brokers were beginning to hurry towards the Exchange, before those ponderous gates should be shut, within whose privileged and mysterious precincts Commerce holds his crowded court. Percival needed not to enter the arena, but he passed close by it, and noted the anxious harassed looks of many who were passing towards the gates. One face and form especially attracted his attention. It was that of his brother-in-law, whose figure looked bent and shrivelled, and whose countenance wore a haggard, eager expression, such as he had never seen there before. Percy started forward to speak to and detain him; but, absorbed and excited, Geoffrey neither observed nor attended to the movement, and before Percy could overtake him, was lost amidst the crowd. As he was about to follow him, his gaze rested on one of the placards put forth by the news-venders in the vicinity, and he read in large staring words, "Commercial panic! Failure of the great house of — and Co.—liabilities over £2,000,000!" then, in another line, "Other expected stoppages." With an undefined terror creeping over him, Percival purchased one of the journals to which these catch-penny puffs had directed his attention, and hastened to a coffee-house in the neighbourhood, where he could see the outlines filled up of the sketch which had worked so strongly on his imagination.

When Percy called that evening at Geoffrey's residence, and inquired "if Mr. Armitage was at home?" the man hesitated, but, receiving his card, civilly requested him to walk into the dining-room, and said he would inquire. In a minute he returned, and led the way towards the library, situated at the back of the spacious mansion, where, before a table covered with papers, sat Geoffrey, his face wearing a still more haggard expression than that which had distressed Percy a few hours before. As he rose to greet his guest, his voice sounded hollow and feeble.

"What means all this, Geoffrey?" exclaimed Percy, as soon as the door closed; "something fearful must have happened, to change you thus in a few months. Tell me the truth. I have always been your friend, and now am bound by a nearer and dearer tie to your welfare and interest."

After a brief pause of mingled shame and agitation, Geoffrey yielded to the influence of Percy's genuine warmth and sincerity, and laid bare the threatening aspect of his affairs, the failures announced that morning having added to his embarrassments. The next day was that fixed for completing the bargain he expected to turn out so advantageously, and he was still without the means (and since the morning without the hope) of meeting the demand. "And if I fail in this engagement, and it gets wind, I shall be ruined irretrievably, for confidence once shaken can never be restored in the money market."

"Come, come," cried Percy, as he thus wound up his unpleasant communication, "things may be settled even yet, with a little judgment and assistance. Even I bring an offer to pay you money if you will have it;" and he named Jessie's proposal for the purchase of the Manor House.

Geoffrey turned deadly pale, and remained silent for a few moments; then, mastering his irresolution, he said, "I accept the offer, for here at least I can give a fair equivalent for money. The Manor House is Jessie's for the price named; but I will not deceive *you*. Her purchase does not benefit me one penny, for I have already (although but for a time, as I hoped) made use of her principal in warding off some of the blows which have fallen so thick and fast upon me."

Repugnant as was this breach of trust to Percival's honourable principles, he would not press heavily on his erring and suffering brother. "It is true that, in God's eyes, you have committed a great wrong," he said; "but as he has mercifully presented you with the means of repairing it, and you have accepted them, let the subject drop until the legal transfer can take place."

Percival's return home was delayed many days beyond the one appointed; for, like a true friend, he would not forsake a brother in adversity, and gave his clear unbiassed judgment to help him through his difficulties. These were greatly increased by the fearful pressure in the money market; and, as far as was prudent, Percy assisted him to meet the accumulated demands; but still he soon saw that a crisis was inevitable, and his advice was consequently at once prompt and firm. "Better lose everything than honour" was his concluding remark; and

Geoffrey acted on it, although not without a pang.

"You will be happier for having made this voluntary sacrifice," was his consoling remark, when Geoffrey pointed to the advertisement of his elegant modern furniture, pictures, bronzes, articles of vertu, etc.; which the auctioneer had set forth with all the usual flourishes of his professional trumpet, as "the property of a gentleman about to travel on the continent." "Let the storm blow over, the sky will be the clearer for it," continued his steady friend: "come and stay with us in the country for a while, until you determine on your future plans. Jessie will be delighted to see you."

"In her *own* house," interrupted Geoffrey, with a sad smile. "I have been well paid for the Manor House."

Percy pressed his hand. "I have learned some of my dear uncle's proverbs, and, I hope, the practical application of them. 'Bitter medicine may have wholesome effects,' and I trust you will find it so in this case."

Geoffrey's affairs, however, were too hopelessly embarrassed to be thus easily adjusted, and many a deep draught of the cup of humiliation had he to take before they were finally arranged. When that arrangement was at length accomplished, England had lost its charms for him, and he was glad to accept a situation in a distant colony (which Percy's influence secured for him), and where he had time to study the lessons of plodding diligence which he had so much neglected in early life.

"Well, my dear boy," was Uncle William's remark to Percy, when seated by him in his happy home, "I trust this bursting of another bubble may make you still more content to tread the even, lowly road suited to your safe designation of a 'plodder.' 'He who *gets*, does much; but he who *keeps*, does more,' say the cautious Germans; and I doubt not that 'Geoffrey the Genius' will often reflect, with vexation and sorrow, on how truly he has verified the proverb which I often playfully, but warningly, named to him at the outset of his career, namely, 'Much would have more, and so lost all.'"

#### HIGHEST RAILWAY IN THE WORLD.

THOUGH man has not yet stood on the top of the mountains, so as to surmount the highest points of his present home, yet an advance considerably more than half way has been made to them. He may be said, in fact, to have risen above the level of the sea, by sheer pedestrianism, quite as far as it is worth rising, even if it were possible by trudging to go up higher; for nothing would be encountered but snow, ice, sleet-storms, and rarefied air, with the most extreme bodily exhaustion. It is not certain that we yet know the greatest elevation of the terrestrial surface. This was long supposed to be Dhawalagiri, one of the Himalayas, 28,073 feet. Then the distinction was transferred to the neighbouring Kanchingga, which slightly exceeds that height. But about two years ago, it was satisfactorily ascertained that Mount Everest,



in the same range, nearly due north of Calcutta, towers to 29,000 feet—very nearly equal to five miles and a half; and perhaps still loftier peaks of that vast protuberance may be determined. The butterfly has rambled up from the world below to 15,750 feet, having been found fluttering over the bare head of Mont Blanc. Human footsteps have ascended 19,700 feet. To that height M. Boussingault and Colonel Hall clambered on the side of Chimborazo in the Andes—the greatest elevation yet attained by man, without leaving the surface in a balloon.

Many of our countrymen annually climb to the top of Helvellyn, stand on the brow of Snowdon, and scale the summits of Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis. Yet, as to permanent or frequent altitude above the sea-level, we are a very humble race in comparison with some of our continental neighbours. The highest village in the kingdom, Leadhills in Lanarkshire, is at the elevation of 1500 feet; and the highest house is 1700, Carour, a hunting-lodge in the Highlands. But at Madrid, upwards of 200,000 people dwell at the elevation of 2200 feet, on a naked desert plain, chilled by a biting breeze for nine months of the year, while baked by the sun during the remaining three. This is the highest of the capitals of Europe. The highest of its palaces, La Granja, the summer residence of the Spanish sovereigns, is elevated 3940 feet, exceeding that of the summit of Vesuvius. The highest village, Soglio, in the Swiss canton of the Grisons, is 6714 feet; the highest fortress, that of the Fort de l'Infernel, comprised within the line of the fortifications of Briançon, in France, is 7859; the highest hospice, that of the Great St. Bernard, is 7963; and the highest permanent habitation, in the pass of Santa Maria, is 9272 feet. In the Andes of South America, where a tropical temperature prevails, mankind dwell much more aloft than in Europe. Potosi, the highest city of the globe, on the celebrated metalliferous mountain, is 13,350 feet above the sea; a farm at Ancochallani, in Peru, is 14,683; and a post-house at Rumihuasi 15,540—but very little below the altitude of Mont Blanc, on whose head none have ever stayed except for an hour or two, and have generally quitted it in less time.

But our special business is with roads, and, in the literal sense of the phrase, with high-roads and railways.

In the last century, Pontoppidan, the good Bishop of Bergen, published an account of Norway, in which, speaking of the deficiency of the country in roads, he suggested laying them out on the top of the mountains, though it would be a work of difficulty, he admitted, owing to the snow. To readers unacquainted with the region, this seemed a most preposterous idea. But the Scandinavian mountains have a contour which goes far to vindicate the bishop from having entertained an extravagant conception. They present no succession of pointed peaks, sharp-backed ridges, steep declivities, deep ravines, and narrow valleys; but, after having risen precipitously on the side of the ocean, their upper surface extends for miles and leagues nearly on a level. Roads might be carried for

great distances upon them, without encountering greater difficulties in their level than in the plains of England, the patches of snow over which they would have to pass, even in summer, being the only hindrances. But ordinary highland countries, where the mountains are serrated ridges, presenting yawning gulfs and frowning precipices, have by engineering skill been intersected with highways admitting of convenient transit across their Alpine barriers. The loftiest carriage-road in Europe, 9174 feet, crosses the ridge of Monte Stelvio, one of the Rhaetian Alps, a little way down the valley of the Adige, and is a great thoroughfare between the Tyrol and Lombardy.

Railways, at first thought to be only practicable on level lowlands, when their practicability there was admitted, are now rapidly taking possession of the highlands; and the locomotive already snorts, screams, and whistles, at an elevation about equal to that of the highest point of the British Isles. In England, the summit level of the Cromford and High Peak railway is 1290 feet; but that of the line between Vienna and Trieste, in the Scemmering Pass, is 3000. This is exceeded in Spain by the line from Santander to Reynosa, across the Austrian mountains, partly opened for traffic in 1857, which has two of its stations 3031 and 3053 feet above the mean tide of the Bay of Biscay. In the United States, the locomotive has not been carried up above 2700 feet, the summit level of the Baltimore and Ohio railway, in the pass of the Blue Mountains; but in South America, on the Copiapo extension line, it travels at the height of 4075 feet, which will be increased to 4479, when two miles further are completed. This is, we believe, at present the highest railway in the world; and deserves notice not merely on that account, but as traversing one of the most extraordinary regions of the globe—a waterless desert teeming with wealth.

Glancing at a good map, the port of Caldera will be perceived on the coast of Chili, one of the stopping places for the Pacific Company's steamers. Ten years ago it was a most miserable spot, consisting of a few fishermen's huts upon the beach. But in the brief interval it has become a rapidly rising town, with a good landing wharf and mole, a custom-house, shops, hotels, machine-establishments, and a convenient railway station, which would do honour to the provincial town of any state. From hence, a railway extends to the city of Copiapo, fifty miles inland, where an excellent station greets the traveller. The engineers arrived from England in April, 1850; the first sleepers were laid in the following December, and the line was opened for traffic towards the close of 1851. It traverses a most hopeless waste, where there is no vegetation, not a stream, rill, or spring; and the whole of the water required by the engines is carried along with them in tanks, every drop or which is distilled from the sea at Caldera. The entire country is bleached with saltpetre and other salts, lying some depth upon the surface, and forms the southern boundary of the terrible desert of Atacama, which stretches for hundreds of miles to Peru, between the coast and the snow-capped

Andes. Formerly, the journey occupied a long day, one of great suffering from the intense heat and suffocating clouds of dust, far surpassing the similar discomforts of the transit between Cairo and Suez. It is now accomplished daily in less than three hours.

The railway was constructed in order to bring the two great mining districts of Chili into easy communication with the coast, facilitate the transport of provisions and water to the establishments, where the price was enormous, with the conveyance of the ores to port. The mines were originally opened for copper, under the superintendence of hardy Cornish miners; and the ores had to be conveyed to the nearest shore by mules, with great difficulty, privation, and cost, to be sent from thence round Cape Horn to the smelting-works at Swansea, in Wales. But now silver is the capital product. No localities can well be conceived more arid, verdureless, and repelling in appearance, than those which are the richest in subterranean wealth—sandy wastes, intersected by the most bare, rugged, and forbidding-looking mountains. Apart from the rising villages, and a few wretched wanderers hunting after treasure, who frequently perish in the wilderness, there is scarcely a living creature, animal, bird, or insect, except the far-sighted vulture, soaring in mid-air to desery the prey, which so surely and so often sinks with fatigue and thirst in the plains below, or is perched moodily on some adjoining crag, digesting its horrid repast. In unfrequented places, human remains are sometimes found, those of the “catadores,” or mine-hunters, in a wonderful state of preservation, looking like fresh mummies, owing to the dryness of the climate. The bodies of mules are more frequent, some in the most striking positions, having died in the very act of leaning against a rock for support, or while attempting to nibble a last atom from, here and there, a miserable and stunted thorn bush. Five years have sometimes passed without a single shower. Hence the cost of water, brought on the backs of donkeys from many leagues distance, has formed a very considerable item in the accounts of the mines, amounting in one instance to not less than £2000 annually. A nine-gallon cask of brackish water has cost £1 12s.; the baiting of a horse or mule £3; and the sum of £400 has been paid for a well of indifferent water eleven feet deep. Yet in these inhospitable regions there are stored incalculable riches, concealed beneath the surface, but in many instances cropping out. Besides copper, lead, iron, bismuth, cobalt, antimony, arsenic, and quicksilver, veins of the purest silver-ore intersect the sterile wilds.

From Copiapo, at the height of 1200 feet, an extension railway, recently opened, proceeds to Chanareillo—“stunted bush”—distant about fifty miles to the south, where it attains the elevation of more than 4000 feet. This place, now a town, with rich silver mines, chiefly confined to a spur of one of the mountain ranges, was thirty years ago almost a perfect solitude. It happened on the 18th of May, 1832, that a muleteer, Juan Godsi, reached the spot while hunting a guanaco. Hav-

ing wounded his game, he pursued it till he was so utterly overcome with fatigue and thirst, that he could advance no farther, and sank down on a rock, trusting that on the return of his dogs, their mouths would show that they had come up with their victim. In a very short time he found that he was sitting on a rugged block of pure silver, which had crested out from a vein immediately beneath. From that moment, the fame of Chanareillo dates as a rich mining country. Immediately afterwards, a poor peon slept beneath a projecting crag, and in the morning found that his frugal fire had brightened the wall of his resting-place. That wall was the outside of an isolated mass of silver, which, when cut out, yielded 2800 marcos to the fortunate owner; but there were no indications whatever of a vein underneath. But others were discovered, and successfully worked, till the miners came down upon a mass of hard rock, known in the language of the country as a *mesa de piedra*, or “stone table.” Here the veins were lost, and it seemed to be the limit of their course. But, encouraged by a beautiful old Spanish proverb, “*Toda flor tiene su raíz*”—“Every flower hath its root,” Don José Gallo resolved to attempt the passage of the barrier. Shafts were sunk; fathom after fathom was pierced; but the “table” appeared to be of interminable thickness. His means became so utterly exhausted, that his wife had to keep a small school, and his sons to take to manual labour in order to provide for their support. At last, at the great depth of 266 feet, the barrier was cut through, when vein after vein, band after band, of rich native silver rewarded the adventurer. Other proprietors then imitated his example, with the like success. A second extension railway from Copiapo is contemplated, leading northward to Los Tres Puntos, three pointed heights in the centre of an equally remarkable mining district, as well as a grand trunk line across the Andes, connecting the shores of the Pacific at Valparaiso with those of the Atlantic at Buenos Ayres.

## THE GARDEN.

### CHAPTER II.—THE MODERN GARDEN.

THE existence among all civilized peoples of public gardens, accessible to all ranks and classes, is the best, as it is the most prominent, evidence of the universal liking which prevails for such artificial assemblages of all that is beautiful and delightful in nature. If such a liking were not very general, there would assuredly be no public gardens; and we may regard their increase among us of late years as an indication of a decided improvement in the popular taste and feeling, and as an augury of still further ameliorations in that direction. The public garden, like the public park, is the poor man's landed estate, in which he can disport himself on his own ground, and derive at once recreation and instruction, pleasure and health. As yet, we English have fewer gardens of this kind gratuitously open to all, than are to be found among our neighbours. There is Hampton Court and there is Kew for the Londoner, both exquisite of

their kind, but both at an expensive distance; and there are the metropolitan garden parks, which are more accessible, and which he knows how to appreciate. Of public gardens of another kind—gardens in which amusements and recreations, innocent and instructive, or dissipating and objectionable because demoralizing, are to be had on the payment of an admission fee—there is no lack, either in the suburbs of London, or in those of other large towns of the kingdom: in fact, throughout the country, almost every man who caters for the holiday-making populace now finds it to his interest to add the delights of a garden to such other recreative elements as he has it in his power to provide. Hence the suburban tavern is, more frequently than not, the entrance to a suburban garden, thronged on the summer evenings and holidays by the population of the city, and where all sorts of cheap pleasures, generally the very reverse of what could be desired, are indulged in to a late hour; and thus one of the means of the greatest good is made subservient to the worst results. Many of these places in the neighbourhood of London are absolute pests to the districts in which they are situated—turning night into day, and furnishing occasion to the orgies of intemperance during the quiet hours of the sabbath.

But it is not in public gardens, whatever may be their design, whether they be arranged for purposes of science, as the Botanical Gardens of Paris, of London, or of Kew—or for those of mere pleasure, as Vauxhall, Rosherville, or Cremorne—or for pleasure and instruction combined, as in the Zoological Gardens of Regent's Park—that the visitor need expect to see the art of gardening carried out to perfection. Let us endeavour to recal the idea of a modern garden on a grand scale, as it impressed us some few years ago, when, following in the wake of her Majesty, we paid a flying visit to the ducal mansion of Stowe.

It was a glorious morning in June, with a light balmy breeze in the air, and only a few feathery cirri floating aloft in the upper cloud region, when we entered one of the gates of the outer demesne. A level road, straight as a plumb line, and flanked on either side by a grassy sward, shut in by rows of trees, and three miles in length, led up to the enclosed park, the gate of which formed a classic Roman arch of triumph. Passing through this gate, we changed the straight chalky road for a circular gravelled drive, completely embosomed in trees, and chequered with the leafy shadows tempering the warmth of the unclouded sun. On for two miles more, through leafy avenues, over shaven grass, skirting now the margin of a lake and now the bold swell of a woody hill, and so to the rear of the mansion and stabling for our weary steed. And now, after some welcome refreshment, for a walk in the gardens we had come to see.

Crossing a wide lawn, bordered with beds of exquisite flowers in finest bloom, rising in tiers by the slope of the soil, and backed by choicest shrubs, we entered a shady walk redolent of fragrant odours from unseen plants. The gloom of the walk, as it swept in a wide curve, deepened as we advanced, and through the foliage to the left the

forms of black and jagged rocks were dimly seen. The path led down-hill, and still denser grew the gloom, when our guide took us by the hand, and led us through an opening in the solid rock, by a passage as dark as midnight. Twenty paces in the dark—and lo! we were standing in an arched grotto, and fronting the most magical spectacle the mind can conceive, and which we feel at a loss to describe. Imagining a space about the size of the area of Westminster Hall, but narrower. Instead of walls and roof, conceive the space surrounded and covered in by a plantation of limes, birches, and other lofty trees rising at the three sides and meeting in an arch at the top, so completely as to shut out all but a few patches of the dense blue sky; and, instead of solid floor, conceive a surface of transparent crystal, in which the whole was so perfectly reflected, that it was literally impossible to tell where the reality ceased and the reflection began. The sunlight streamed in a thousand shafts of gold through the glimmering foliage; a thousand birds darted from spray to spray; you saw them in the golden vault above, and you saw them as plainly in the golden depth below. So pure was the colourless flood, that one or two aquatic plants, whose white cups reposed on its surface, seemed as though miraculously poised in mid-air, and you half expected to see them fall into the beautiful abyss. The delusion was all the more perfect, that the eye failed to detect any appearance of soil on which the double vault of sun-lighted foliage could grow; where the trunks of the trees did not actually rise out of the water, their roots were screened by flags and reeds which grew in it, and whose motionless upright spears shot down as deep into the viewless flood. Here and there flowering creepers had wound round the trunks and branches, and, drooping pendant towards the surface, courted their own shadows in the glassy depth. The only sounds were the tinkling of a little rill that dripped from the corner of the grotto into a pebbly basin four feet, and the songs of birds in the branches above, who had evidently chosen that spot as a theatre of special enjoyment.

Retracing our steps from this matchless grotto, and pursuing the dark walk, we soon emerged upon a wild-looking glen guarded by some colossal tritons in bronze; they were classical figures, and they stood guardians to a classical shrine; for before proceeding far we were at the entrance of an alcove which led to a gallery of the Muses, where we were introduced to the statues in marble of nearly all the world-renowned thinkers and teachers whom mankind have delighted to honour, from the days of Homer to those of Sir Walter Scott. This noble shrine, thus nobly occupied, stood at the head of a grassy glade which sloped down to the margin of a piece of winding water, now narrowing to the width of a brook, now expanding to the dimensions of a lake, but neither of the termini of which was described, though the eye might follow it for nearly a mile. Boats were moving on its surface in the distance, and a handsome barge was moored near the bank not far below.

From this point we were led through a terraced flower-garden, continually ascending, to the margin

of a wood traversed by mossy walks and furnished with seats at various points of view; from some of these points the course of the river was visible for a long distance, from others the grand façade of the mansion; and from one a pastoral scene was disclosed, where flocks and herds were feeding, and husbandmen were busy at their labours. Having traversed the wood, an abrupt turn in the path brought us to the brow of a hill commanding the perspective of a deep grassy vale of richest verdure, which ran round the bases of a number of gentle slopes, rising variously from fifty to a hundred feet, and nearly all of them backed by noble forest trees broken into vistas here and there, revealing panoramas of pastoral English landscape, twenty, thirty, forty miles in extent. Nearly fronting where we stood, and on one of the loftiest of the group of swelling grassy hills, rose a Grecian temple, almost a fac-simile in size and architectural details of an ancient Athenian structure. On the sloping sward in front of the façade, groups of idlers were lolling in the shade, or, seated in circles on the grass, gave themselves up to the delicious luxury of the hour and the scene, while the voices of prattling children mingled with the gurgle of some invisible stream and the wild wood-notes of the birds.

Crossing the green valley and ascending the opposite slope, the way led again through a wilderness of immemorial trees, and up a continually rising ground. Suddenly, on reaching an open spot, we stood in front of an old round tower, solid as the masonry of a feudal castle. We entered and climbed the stone staircase, round and round the central pillar, and but dimly lighted by a few arrow-slits pierced at intervals in the granite wall. Breathless with the ascent, we emerged at length upon a narrow gallery. Was it a delusion? Had we really climbed a hundred feet into the air? or had we taken all that trouble and wasted all that breath in ascending fifteen or twenty? So it seemed at the first glance; for we had come out on the gallery not twenty feet above the summits of the tall trees that grew around the tower, and there they lay, those tree-tops, just beneath us, their close, compact mass of densest foliage showing like one vast bed of green damask cushions stretching away into the far distance, and large enough for the repose of all the Titans of ancient fable, and temptingly inviting them to slumber. Or, you might imagine the exquisite undulating surface, solid as the ground you had lately quitted, save at intervals when a fitful gust would stir a portion of the mass, when you instinctively recoiled from the sight as though the earth were heaving beneath you. The view from the tower, beyond this foreground of tree-tops, embraced the area of some half-score counties, and on a clear day enclosed landmarks known to be sixty miles asunder. There, looking down, we recognised, showing like a white thread, the three-mile road along which we had driven, and at three other points of the compass three other roads of like extent, traversing the same demesne, and all converging towards the ducal park and mansion.

We had descended from the tower, and found the means of refreshment in a lone hermitage in

the wood; we had started again, and wandered through endless labyrinths of shady walks—through groves of graceful beech—by the margin of babbling streams, through glass conservatories where the ripe limes were nodding on the branch, and myriads of rare flowers dazzled the eye and delighted the sense—through avenues of noble trees and through realms of odorous roses; we had lost our guide and strayed we knew not whither, when we found ourselves fronting a neat little gothic church, flanked by magnificent cypresses and a grove of ancient yews. Was the church a garden-church—a mere decoration? or was it a temple for the worship of God, reared in this earthly paradise? The latter, we found on inquiry, was the case. The Duke's chaplain was the incumbent, and his cure of souls lay among the Duke's family and retainers, who amounted to a considerable number, and formed a congregation regular in their attendance. The church was the household.

It is probable that in the course of our day's ramble, we did not see half of this modern garden; the evening began to close in before we were sated with the view, and we had to leave much unexplored. We saw enough, however, to impress us with an idea of a garden, preferable, we think, even to that of Lord Bacon. Here, instead of thirty acres, was something like four hundred, and there was no necessity for carpenter's work to fabricate variety and create the illusion of distance. The aspect of the ground, though rich in the elements of the picturesque beyond comparison, was such that it was impossible to draw the line between the artificial and the natural. Everywhere nature had been indulged instead of thwarted—beautified instead of distorted. The garden-buildings were not only picturesque in effect, but each was the centre of its own appropriate locality; the Grecian temple did not contrast either with the ducal mansion or the feudal tower, but was out of sight of both, in a vale which might have bordered the groves of Academe; the solid tower rose amidst ancient trees, older than itself, perhaps; and where the farmhouse and the labours of the husbandman were open to view from the garden, there was neither classic antiquity nor modern artificiality in the garden itself, to offend the eye of taste by unseemly contrast. Herein lies much of the secret of the science of gardening, or at least of that part of the science in which art and not nature is called into operation. We often see in gardens, both public and private, where much expense has been lavished, the most absurd effects produced by the incongruous mixture or juxtaposition of objects which do not harmonize with each other. In our public gardens we have Grecian statues, the Apollo Belvidere or the Antinous, for instance, stuck up for martyrdom in a smoking saloon—or the group of the Laocoon agonizing in the grasp of the terrible serpent, by way of set-off to a ginger-beer stall! Suburban publicans are still less discriminating in their notions of harmony; we have seen Milton enthroned in a skittle-alley, and Queen Victoria swaying her sceptre where the policeman should have been swaying his truncheon. The retired cit, who not unfrequently





THE TRELLIS WINDOW, TRENTHAM HALL GARDENS.

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takes to ornamental gardening after a life of money-making, is equally open to animadversion. He is fond of collecting all sorts of oddities in his grounds, if he can but get them a bargain—such as plaster casts, pieces of old armour or ordnance, a cashiered weather-vane mounted on a flag-staff, the figure-head of a ship, or an old rusty anchor, though he was never at sea (till he took to gardening) in his life; nay, we have seen him mount a sun-dial projected for one aspect, upon another, fronting a different part of the heavens.

All such absurdities point to ignorance of the true principles of gardening. It is one thing to be fond of a garden, as most men are now-a-days; it is another thing to know how to make the most and the best of a piece of garden-ground. A garden, however small, may be laid out on true principles; and however large, and whatever natural advantages the ground may offer, it may be spoiled by ignoring or neglecting them. Fortunately, no man need be at a loss for information if he will condescend to seek it; he may find his *vade-mecum* in every bookseller's shop, and carry an able instructor in his pocket, at a cost little more than nominal.

#### A RECOLLECTION OF CADIZ IN 1812.

It was during the Peninsular War that my visit to Cadiz took place, and when the town was besieged by a strong division of the French army, commanded by Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno, who had under his orders some of Napoleon's ablest generals. What a charming place was Cadiz at that period, despite the warlike doings in and around it! The beautiful city—growing out of the sea, as it were—was crowded, not only with British and Spanish forces, in addition to the usual garrison and population, but it was then the seat of the Spanish Government. The Cortes or Parliament also assembled there; whilst many of the highest families of Spain had flocked to Cadiz as a secure place of refuge from the invading and destroying armies of the French. A fleet of British men-of-war, too, was anchored in the noble bay; and our naval and military officers were ever cordially received in the best society, both at the houses of the wealthy British merchants, and at the numerous pleasant Spanish parties. Cadiz having been declared a free port, plentiful supplies of every description were introduced by sea, though the place was closely besieged by land.

Crowded as the city was, I considered myself very fortunate on the day I landed, to get accommodated at an unpretending inn, situated in a narrow street not far from the sea-gate and market-place. It was called "*La Posada de los tres Reyes*," or the Three Kings' Inn. I was told I could have a bed. Upon asking to see my room, the landlord said, "*No tenga vo cuidado, señor*,"—"Don't be uneasy about that, sir." So, being of a confiding disposition, I made no farther inquiry, and went where my duty called me; first, however, informing myself as to the dinner hour.

With a good appetite, I was punctual, and was

ushered into a large room, with whitewashed walls, its whole central length being occupied by a table covered with a clean table-cloth, and queer-looking knives, forks, spoons, and plates laid on either side of it. Several Spanish guests had already arrived, while others came rapidly in and took their seats. I followed their example. When all the places were occupied, a variety of smoking dishes were brought in by *mozos*, or serving lads, clad in homely guise. A very good dinner it was: some of the dishes were a little *garlicized*, but that was of no consequence. Each guest had a bottle of good white wine, called *mansanilla*, placed beside him. A plentiful and excellent dessert was served, partly consisting of very fine grapes, melons, green figs, and confectionery. I spoke Spanish tolerably. My neighbours, many of whom were Spanish military officers, were very companionable and obliging. I was then quite a youngster. In due time the *table d'hôte* broke up, and I sallied forth to look about the city.

Towards evening, I found my way to the *Alaméda*, a beautiful public promenade near the sea-wall. It is bordered on either side by fine poplars, whence it derives its name, the Spanish for a poplar-tree being *alamo*. From this spot there is a grand view of the bay. Nothing could be more attractive and enlivening, on that fine summer evening, than this *Alaméda*. The promenaders were very numerous, and I admired the charming *gaditanas*, as the ladies of Cadiz are called, wearing their black silk dresses, their elegant mantillas resting on rather high tortoise-shell combs at the back of the head, and falling gracefully over the shoulders and bust. All the ladies had fans, which they managed with proverbial dexterity and grace.

I returned to my inn at about eleven o'clock that night, after having passed a few hours with some brother officers. The gate was closed. I made a primitive rusty iron knocker do its duty, more than once, before the shutter of a small barred aperture in the wicket was thrown back, and a grim face appeared behind them, illumined by a curious butter-boat-shaped iron lamp, which its owner held up.

"*Quien es?*"—"Who is it?" he inquired, in a cracked voice.

"*Gente de paz*"—"Peaceful folk," I replied.

"*Que quiere vo, señor*"—"What do you want, sir?"

"*Irme à mi cama*"—"To go to my bed. I engaged it this morning; I dined here, my portmanteau is in the house, and I have not yet paid my bill," said I.

"Oh! very well: I'll let you in directly."

He did so, and I asked to be shown to my bedroom.

"Certainly, señor," said the wiry old porter; and by the light of the butter-boat lamp, well supplied with olive-oil, in which was steeped a skein of wick, the lighted part of it resting just within the spout, he led the way up-stairs to the large room where we had dined.

How completely was it metamorphosed! The long table had vanished. I found afterwards that, by a clever though simple contrivance, it was made to serve two essential hostelry purposes. It was

composed of several deal planks resting on trestles, so that it could be taken to pieces in a few minutes, and converted into a variety of ephemeral bedsteads, by placing three or four of the planks side by side, the ends resting on two of the same trestles. There was a row of these improvised bedsteads, furnished with thin mattresses, sheets, and pillows, along each side of the room, the heads of them being close to the wall, with a passage down the middle.

Whilst I was looking from the open door at this queer array, the clank of a chain sounded over my head. Looking up, I perceived a very large ape squatted on a ledge above the door, and chained. The creature was grinning a horrible grin at me, and making unavailing efforts to get at me. I turned my astonished gaze towards the lean porter, who coolly said: "Don't heed him, señor; he can't reach you. This is his usual post at night."

"Well," I replied, "this is a funny sentinel. Have the goodness to show me my bed." He preceded me along the middle space, and halted before a vacant bed. Excepting mine, each was occupied by a sleeping, and, here and there, a snoring Spaniard. The porter hitched the lamp—which hung by a rusty chain—to a long nail in the wall, and saying, "Buenas noches, señor"—"Good night, sir," vanished.

The ape, the dormitory, and all that had passed, amused me greatly. I burst out into loud laughter. I couldn't help it; and whilst preparing to get into my trestle-bed, and before composing my mind to quieter meditation, I began to sing a song of old England. Soon, there was a rustling among the occupants of the beds—impatient turnings about; and presently, several upturned, queer, sleepy, and rather angry faces appeared glaring at me. Still, I went on joyously, and I must confess very inconsiderately, singing. One by one, several of the Spaniards sat up on their mattresses, their eyes all directed towards me. I was then sitting on my own mattress. Paper cigars were lighted, and soon the worthy smokers joined in laughingly encouraging me to go on. I did so for a little time, and then, bowing politely to my courteous audience, I lay me down—the good-natured Spaniards following my example. When all was again silent, I heard the ape's chain rattling above the doorway, and the thump, thump of his ugly legs, jumping from side to side.

The next day I left the posada, and took up the quarters assigned to me in a better part of the city. But I often revisited it, and took my posada-dinner in the old dining and bed-room. Occasionally I met there some of my good-tempered Spanish friends, most of them officers. These were always most pleasant meetings, and the old dormitory laugh always came over us. I never saw the ape again. He was locked up in some outhouse during the day. Why he was planted at night, as a sort of sentinel over the door of the improvised sleeping-room I never could discover.

This little anecdote—which I am conscious does me no credit—being the escapade of a joyous, unthinking youth, shows the indulgent nature of Spaniards. They still retain a large share of the ancient Castilian nobleness of character. They are

far too severely criticised by foreigners. Some allowance must be made for a nation trodden down during centuries by civil and spiritual oppression.

The utmost enthusiasm for the cause of Spanish independence reigned amongst all classes at this period, and the most glowing attachment towards Fernando VII—THE UNGRATEFUL—then a captive in France. His very name acted as a charm. I witnessed many instances of it. Disputes frequently arose in the streets among the lower classes of the excitable Andalusians. Large case-knives would be drawn, and jackets thrown over the left arm as shields; but if, when each combatant, with fiery eyes and frantic gestures, would be on the point of making a deadly rush upon his antagonist, some peace-loving bystander should shout, "Viva Fernando Septimo," the cry was sure to be instantly echoed by all around, and even by the dread quarrellers themselves; and time was thus gained for peace-makers to step in and effect a reconciliation.

All British officers were directed, in general orders, to provide themselves, and cause to be affixed to the centre of their black cockades, smaller ones made of red cloth with *F 7°* embroidered on them in gold or silver thread. This was a judicious and a very popular measure. These cockades were sold in the shops for a *péseta*, or tenpence each.

Several convents and monasteries then existed in Cadiz. The majority of the monks were a very fine race of men, in the prime of life. The monastic establishments have long since, and with great reason, been abolished throughout Spain. In this great national crisis, however, there were no lazy Cadiz friars. Voluntarily and cheerfully they all turned out to work at the batteries, which were being constructed with all speed, for the defence of the place. It was very pleasant and exhilarating to see hundreds of them daily at their patriotic labours; their serge gowns of different colours, according to the orders to which they belonged—brown, bluish grey, or white—tucked up round their waists and fixed by the ropes which usually encircled their loins, leaving their stout limbs encased in ample linen drawers, and their sandalled feet quite free. They plied pickaxe and spade with vigour and goodwill, and, with the proper implements, rammed down, to form a glacis, the upturned earth cast aloft by their compere, who were excavating ditches or moats with as much force and tact as any sappers and miners or modern navvies could do.

At the close of their day's work, these worthy monks, with their frocks let down, and their cowls over their heads, repaired in ranks, two and two abreast, to their respective convents, in as much quietude and order as though they had been returning from their usual evening promenades. When all the batteries were completed, these extra monastic duties of course ceased.

In the hot summer evenings, it was customary for detachments of about twenty monks at a time to go to a small bay called La Caléta, to bathe. This is a picturesque inlet, with a fine sandy beach, in the centre part, though on either side are rocks covered by the sea at high-water. At the extremity

is the lofty lighthouse of San Sebastian. The Caléta was a general bathing-place, much frequented and enjoyed by the British officers. The bathing monks were very singular, and very laughable objects to us English youngsters, though they did not seem to be so to the grave lay Spaniards. The Capuchin friars excited our wonder and risibility the most. They all had very full, long, flowing beards, reaching low down the chest. After depositing their brown serge frocks and sandals on the shore, they leisurely walked down to the water's edge in their loose linen drawers, each carrying a good-sized red silk umbrella. Having all lighted their cigarros, they slowly and solemnly walked into the calm sea until it reached to about their waists. Then they squatted themselves down at short distances from each other, having first opened the large red silk umbrellas. They speedily adjusted themselves so as to leave only their great fat faces and shaven crowns visible, together with the capacious beards, which floated on the surface of the water like so much sea-weed. This—the red umbrellas held over their heads to shelter them from the sun, the grave impassive countenances, and the lighted cigars sticking out from their thatched mouths, like so many chimneys—formed a most ludicrous scene. These placid monks would remain half or three-quarters of an hour in these positions, humouring their cigars to make them last as long; then rising from the briny flood, like so many Neptunes, they shut up their umbrellas, and walked, apparently in a state of perfect satisfaction, to where they had deposited their apparel and towels.

How we light-hearted young men did laugh! How we swam round and round them, saluting them profoundly as we flashed along, saying politely, "Buen provédro, Reverendísimos!"—"Much good may it do your Reverences;" for which they would gravely, but very good-naturedly, say, "Muchas gracias, señores!"—"Many thanks, gentlemen," though they must have seen that we were quizzing them.

#### SAPPERS AND MINERS OF THE INSECT WORLD.

##### TERMITES, OR "WHITE ANTS."

THE singular habits of the termites have given rise to many fabulous accounts concerning them; but it is certain that the actual facts which investigation has brought to our knowledge, are not less marvellous than the errors devised by the imagination of travellers. The best account of these insects is contained in a paper of the Philosophical Transactions, for 1781, given by Mr. Smeathman, an English naturalist.

They have generally been called "ants," probably on account of the similarity of their manner of living, and their skilful and diligent labour; but they are by no means the same kind of insects. They certainly not only equal but excel ants, bees, wasps, and beavers, in the art of building; and, if we take into account the comparative size of the architects, we find, on comparing the hillocks constructed by these insects, with the most colossal works of man, that the result is calculated to awaken in us sentiments of humility. The great

pyramid of Cheops, in its original state, before the base became covered by the accumulation of sand, was about 480 feet in height. It was, therefore, about ninety-six times the height of a man, assuming the average stature of Africans to be five feet. The hillocks which the termites raise are about a thousand times higher than the insects which construct them; so that these edifices of the white ants are, relatively, many times higher than the loftiest of our monuments.

These artificial mounds are surprisingly strong; they are but of small circumference, compared with their height, and when finished are pointed at the top, so that you might imagine, to look at them, they could be blown down by a violent wind; but, in reality, they are proof against most assaults. While they are still in the course of construction, and when their domes are accessible to the wild bulls, these animals may often be seen standing on their summits, as sentinels to the rest of the herd; and Mr. Smeathman assures us that he and his companions were in the habit of climbing up them in order to survey the surrounding country. In some regions, their magnitude, regularity, and numbers make them resemble an assemblage of negro huts. "They rise from eight to ten feet high, with a smooth surface of rich clay, excessively hard and well built." Situated in the centre of the ground worked by each colony, these edifices may be said to constitute the capital of the community; and, like our own large cities, they have their public streets and squares, through which a numerous population is constantly passing to and fro; their magazines always well filled with provisions; their nurseries, in which new generations are reared by the care of the community; and lastly, the palace of their sovereigns, who are, in truth, the actual father and mother of their subjects.

This description applies to the nests of the *Termes bellicosus*, which is the largest of the species observed by Mr. Smeathman. It would appear, from the memoirs of various authors, that there exist at least twenty-four different species of these insects, nine of which belong to Africa, nine to America, two to Asia, and two to Europe. All the various species are miners, and most of them, moreover, are architects. Some among them build their nests on trees, around a large branch, which they carefully preserve, when it suits their purpose. These nests are often as large as a sugar-barrel, and though exposed to the storms of the tropics, and composed entirely of small pieces of wood, glued together by means of the gums of the district and the juices yielded by the workers themselves, they are never torn away.

Almost all the various species work out of sight, constructing, above their subterranean galleries, buildings which contain their nurseries and store-houses. Two kinds are found to erect column-shaped nests, surmounted by a roof or dome, which projects on all sides; they are generally about three-quarters of a yard high, and a quarter of a yard wide. They are formed entirely of clay, tempered to surprising hardness, so that it is easier to tear one of the columns up from the base than



to break it off in the centre. Nest after nest rises, as the colony increases, till at length the whole resembles a bed of gigantic toadstools.

Like the majority of insects, the termites proceed from an egg, and pass through various stages before attaining perfection. In every nest there are found larvae, nymphs, and perfect insects, accompanied by an immense number of neuters. The latter fulfil the functions of soldiers, and are exclusively occupied in watching over the common safety, as well as in maintaining good order. The larvae and nymphs are by no means idle during their transition states, but perform all the labours required in the community. In fact, they build the dwellings, dig the excavations, amass the provisions, and attend upon the common mother, whose eggs they receive and take care of. Though so much work devolves upon them, they are of very small size. The workers of the *Termes bellicosus* are not larger than our common ants, which they so much resemble that the Creoles and most travellers still call them by that name. Their whole body is of such extreme delicacy that the slightest touch crushes them; but their head is provided with sawlike mandibles, of so strong and horny a substance as to enable them to attack the hardest bodies, excepting only stones and metals.

The soldiers are about twice their length, and weigh as much as fifteen of the workers. This weight is owing to their enormous horny heads, which are much larger than their bodies, and armed with sharp pincers, true weapons of offence, quite unfitted for the purposes of ordinary labour. These preserve, through the whole of their lives, the characters and attributes which have obtained for them the name of soldiers. Although they hardly number one hundredth part of the whole insect population, they constitute a distinct class, which may be compared to the nobility of a monarchy, while the larvae may be looked upon as the plebeians of the community. At ordinary times, they live in idleness, merely keeping guard, or watching the labours of the workers, over whom they evidently exercise authority. In times of war, they show the utmost valour, attacking the enemy, and ready to sacrifice themselves if needful, for the common safety. No sooner is the first blow struck against one of their edifices, than the nearest sentinel is seen to hurry forward. The alarm is given, and in an instant a crowd of combatants hasten to the point of attack, moving their heads in all directions, and opening and shutting their forceps with a loud noise. When once they have fixed these formidable weapons into any substance, nothing can make them loose their hold. They will be torn piecemeal without unlocking their jaws; and woe betide the unfortunate hands and legs which are unprotected from their gripe. They at once draw blood; so that the negroes, who are without shoes and only half-clothed, are soon put to flight, and even Europeans who venture to assail their strongholds do not come off without formidable wounds.

While they are thus engaged in fighting, the soldiers, with their forceps, strike the ground from time to time, and this well-known sound is imme-

diately answered by the labourers, who reply to it with a sort of whistling or hissing noise. As soon as the attack ceases, the fighting men retire, and the masons come out in crowds, each bringing in his mouth a piece of clay, ready prepared. Each in turn applies his portion of mortar to the place that needs repair, and then makes way for another, who does the same; and thus the breach is repaired in a surprisingly short time. While this is going on, the soldiers remain in the interior, excepting one or two to every thousand labourers. One of them appears to be charged with the superintendence of the works, for during the building of a wall he stands at his post, slowly turning his head in all directions, and striking the dome rapidly every few minutes with his forceps, which produces a sound somewhat louder than the ticking of a watch. This is responded to by a hissing noise, which seems to resound from all sides of the building, and is invariably accompanied by signs of increased activity among the labourers.

If the attack be renewed, instantly the workmen disappear, and the soldiers replace them in a twinkling, contesting their ground with the utmost tenacity, and defending it inch by inch. Nor are the labourers meanwhile unoccupied; they block up all the passages and galleries which lead to the various apartments, especially the royal chamber, which they do so artfully that Smeathman, on reaching the centre of one of these edifices, was unable to distinguish it from a shapeless mass of clay. The vicinity of the palace is betrayed, however, by the great crowds of faithful lieges who collect around it, and who allow themselves to be crushed rather than abandon their charge. They even permitted themselves to be taken captives with the royal pair, and when placed in a large glass bowl, were seen incessantly engaged about the person of the queen, giving her food, and removing her eggs, which they carefully piled up in some corner, or retired part of the vessel in which they were imprisoned.

Without destroying their works, it is scarcely possible to get a view of these insects, as they invariably keep below ground, save on peculiar occasions; all the nests having subterranean galleries, which radiate in all directions, and often to very considerable distances from the point of their origin. Even the tree termites construct a long tube which reaches to the ground, and serves as the centre of their covered roads. All the species, too, have the same habits, and their innumerable hosts are incessantly on the watch for some substances on which to prey. It is this instinct which makes them so formidable to many, that Linnaeus did not hesitate to designate them as "the greatest scourge of the Indies." Hidden from the view of those whom they threaten, the termites undermine the very walls of store-houses and dwellings, and make their way up into the interior. Some attack the wood-work, others the furniture, and provisions of every sort, whilst others demolish the floors and roofs; but, being always careful to avoid the light, they never work their way to the surface of the objects they consume, but content themselves with gutting the interior. Their work of destruction progresses

with such amazing rapidity, that one season suffices for the entire destruction of a European house, while a negro village completely disappears within the same period. They have been known to penetrate, in a single night, through the foot of a table, and, ascending the leg from the ground upwards, to attack a box which stood upon it, and so completely to destroy the contents, that next day not an inch of the clothing it contained remained intact, and even papers and pencils, including the lead, had all disappeared in the same time.

So skilfully do they leave the upper sheets and the margin of each leaf entire, that the eye is perfectly deceived, and a mass of crumbling substance has the appearance of a pile of papers in perfect order. In the same way the whole interior of oak posts will crumble under the touch, while externally they look perfectly sound, the layer left untouched by the termites not being thicker than a sheet of paper.

The marching termites are no less curious than the warlike species. They seem to be much scarcer and larger than the other. Our traveller was fortunate enough to see one of their armies march by him. He says: "One day, on my return through the thick forest, suddenly I heard a loud hiss. This noise caused me to move a few paces from the path, where, to my great astonishment and pleasure, I saw an army of termites coming out of a hole in the ground, which could not be above four or five inches wide. They came out in vast numbers, and seemingly as fast as they could possibly march. In less than a yard from the place they divided into two columns, composed chiefly of the labourers, twelve or fifteen abreast, and crowded as closely as sheep in a drove, going straight forward, and among them, here and there, a soldier was to be seen. While these were hastening along, a great many soldiers appeared, spread about on both sides of the two lines of march, some a foot or two distant, standing still or sauntering about, as if on the look-out for any enemies who might assail the labourers. But the most extraordinary part of the march was the conduct of some of the soldiers, who, having mounted the plants which grew here and there, had placed themselves on the points of the leaves, which were raised ten or fifteen feet from the ground, and overlooked the army marching below. Every now and then one or other of these would beat with his forceps upon the leaf, making a noise similar to that described among the warrior species. This signal produced the same effect upon the marching white ants; for instantly the whole army returned the noise, and obeyed by increasing their pace with the utmost haste. At length the two columns united into one, and then descended into the earth by two or three holes. They continued marching by me for above an hour, as I stood admiring them, without any diminution of their numbers."

Towards the beginning of the rainy season, these insects attain their perfect state. Their form and size are then much altered, and they are furnished with four large transparent wings, with which to wing their way in search of a new settlement. Some stormy evening is usually selected for the

period of their flight, when they issue by millions from their subterranean retreats. Their aerial life is, however, of very short duration, for, after a few hours, their wings wither and fall off. On the following day the earth appears thickly strewn with the bodies of these helpless insects, which then become a prey to innumerable foes. Only a small number escape, and, reaching a place of safety, form the foundation of a new community.

All travellers speak of ants being used by certain nations as food; but this is only the case with reference to the termites; and there is no doubt that these insects are eaten by the natives of Africa, as well as by the Indians. However strange it may appear, this extraordinary kind of food seems to be relished even by Europeans, and travellers agree in describing it as savoury and agreeable, resembling in flavour sweetened marrow or cream. Smeathman pronounces them a delicate, nourishing, and wholesome food, and he seems even to prefer them to the famous palm grubs, which, in the West Indies, are brought to the tables of the rich as an exquisite delicacy. Surely the riddle of Samson aptly applies to these destructive insects, "Out of the eater came forth meat."

#### A GROWL ABOUT "BOZZY."

COWPER, in writing of the two biographers of Johnson, (Sir John Hawkins and Boswell,) says: "Sir John was a coxcomb, and Boswell is not less a coxcomb, though of another kind. I fancy Johnson made coxcombs of all his friends, and they in return made him a coxcomb; for, with reverence be it spoken, such he certainly was, and, flattered as he was, he was sure to be so." Whatever truth there may be in Cowper's observation in regard to Johnson, all will assent to it, so far as Boswell is concerned.

We have, in our early days, seen more than one who remembered Boswell, and they fully confirmed the opinion of Cowper, that he was essentially a coxcomb. At the Scotch bar, where he practised, he never rose to eminence; yet, on professional matters he constantly thrust himself where he had no right to intrude, and wrote with a dogmatism which was offensive and mischievous. Thus, when in 1785, the Lord Advocate of the day proposed certain changes in the constitution of the Court of Session (which were effected at a much later period, and have operated most beneficially), "this measure," says Lord Jeffrey, "met with a violent opposition from James Boswell, who wrote a pamphlet against it, exceeding all his other compositions in extravagance and absurdity. This production designates the measure as an alarming attempt to infringe the Articles of the Union, and introduce a most pernicious innovation;" and, had we space or inclination to give details, we could fully support, by examples from it, the truth of Lord Jeffrey's statement. Let the following suffice, which, be it observed, are introduced into the discussion of a matter of grave inquiry and speculation. "The Lord Advocate of Scotland has the whole power of a grand jury in his person.

The fat Mr. Edward Bright, of Malden, whose print is in all our inns, to amuse the weary traveller, is nothing to the learned lord. He could button seven men in his waistcoat; but the learned lord comprehends hundreds; the grand juries of thirty counties are packed within his little circumference." \*\*\* "The Lords of Session are, or should be, gentlemen. Shall we make them a parcel of scrubs? Of a Monday I drive the coach; of a Tuesday I drive the plough; on a Wednesday I follow the hounds; a Thursday I dun the tenants; on Friday I go to market; on Saturday I draw warrants; on Sunday I draw beer." \*\*\* "Duncan Forbes of Culloden, when Lord President of the Court, gave every day as a toast at his table, 'Here's to every Lord of Session who does not deserve to be hanged.'"

"Boswell's Life of Johnson," says Lord Macaulay, "is universally allowed to be interesting, instructive, and eminently original, yet it has brought him nothing but contempt. All the world reads it; all the world delights in it; yet we do not remember ever to have read or ever to have heard any expression of respect or admiration for the man to whom we owe so much instruction and amusement."

These remarks have occurred to us on a perusal of Boswell's "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson," a work which, though at first published separately from the "Life," has properly been incorporated with it in some recent editions, for it has all the qualities for which the latter is distinguished; and as to the general character of the "Life," we fully concur with Lord Macaulay that it gives Boswell a just title to be designated "the first of biographers." To the Journal we may advert more particularly on some future occasion, and may give a few facts and recollections regarding different persons to whom it alludes; but at present we confine ourselves to two observations. One is, that it confirms throughout the exaggerated conception which Boswell had of Johnson's powers, approaching, indeed, to a servile adulation; for it shows that on more than one occasion he submitted to the most contemptuous treatment from "the mighty sage," as he calls him. The other observation is, that some of his statements reflect very little credit on either Johnson or himself, in point of good feeling or good manners. We do not allege that Johnson was directly aware that his admirer meant to publish the Journal; though, as Boswell says he read it to him in the course of its preparation, he must have had a shrewd guess of the intention. It was, perhaps, a pardonable vanity to wish to have his apothegms and saws transmitted to posterity; but what can excuse his saying such a thing as that which we shall now quote, whether he meant or not to sanction its publication? "We dined at Mr. Keith's; Mrs. Keith was rather too attentive to Dr. Johnson, asking him many questions about his drinking only water. He repressed the observation by saying to me, 'You may remember that Lady Errol took no notice of this.'" Lady Errol, we hope, would have had better breeding than to make such a remark to the hostess had

her ladyship been the guest; and what can palliate the gross breach of hospitality in Boswell's publishing, while the party lived, what must have proceeded from a kindly feeling on her part, and of what, at any rate, good feeling would have prompted the concealment and not the exposure by way of ridicule. In the same spirit he tells that, though Lord Monboddo received them most courteously, Johnson at once, and without provocation, just after the first introduction, took occasion to attack one of his lordship's favourite dogmas, so directly, that Boswell was afraid it would have led to a violent altercation. He adds, however, not seeing apparently how the observation told against his idol, "But his lordship is distinguished not only for ancient metaphysics, but for ancient *politesse*, and he made no reply." The bad taste which gave this to the world during Lord Monboddo's life, could do his lordship little harm. Boswell talks, too, of the "vulgarity" of a lady (living when he published) at whose house they had been kindly entertained. Again, "Principal Robertson came to us as we sat at breakfast; he advanced to Dr. Johnson, repeating a line of Virgil. Johnson afterwards remarked, 'that to see a man come up with a formal air and a Latin line, when we had no fatigue and no danger, was provoking.'" This was published in Dr. Robertson's lifetime! "I both blame Mr. Boswell," says Miss Seward, "and wonder at him for the wanton, because unnecessary, inroads which a number of these records must make upon the feelings of many."\*

#### THE RED TRIBUNAL.

WHEN I went into the awful room, where sat the revolutionary committee, the members, who were Vergniaud, Guadet, Osselin, and Chabot the Capuchin, all sat along a green table, and a chair was placed facing them. There were at least forty present. I have only named those I can remember. The chair was very high up steps. I felt much frightened as I mounted the steps. They began by asking the people of my Section what was my crime, and why I had been arrested? They then told the story and produced the letter. Chabot asked me what were the contents of the letter? I assured him that I was ignorant of them; at which Chabot said: "It is a conspiracy. I know this woman; she is a royalist. She has been intriguing in England to make D'Orléans' daughter marry an English prince. Send her to La Force."

Vergniaud, who was civil, said: "I don't see why this woman should have been arrested, because a letter directed to Mr. Fox was found in her house. Had it been directed to the monster Pitt, you could have done no more. Mr. Fox is our friend; he is the friend of a free nation; he loves our Revolution, and we have it here, under his own hand-writing; therefore, can we with honour break open and read a private letter

\* The volume of Boswell's own letters, recently published, more than confirms the worst that has been said about him. Gratitude, however, is not the less due to his memory as the biographer of Johnson.

directed to that great man? No! it shall not be; we will keep the letter, and send it safely to Mr. Fox."

They began to be very warm, and Chabot insisted on the letter being opened and read. Osselin accordingly opened it, and they found that it was in English. As they had no interpreter, they were much at a loss, as he was gone to examine some English papers in the Faubourg St. Germain. Osselin, who was president, made me leave the chair, and come to his side and read the letter and interpret it to them. They said that some of them understood English enough to know whether I told them the truth.

In the first place, Sir Godfrey Webster had inclosed in this letter a printed paper in French, which was Latouche Freville's manifesto to the King of Naples. I then proceeded to read his letter to Fox. It was full of praise and admiration of the courage and energy of the French nation, and also of high admiration of the manifesto. In short, the letter greatly delighted them.

As the interpreter came in, and read it as I had done, they were all in good humour with me except Chabot. Osselin wanted to conduct me home in one of the coaches belonging to the Comité, for they had all coaches. This I declined. I told them of the two cruel nights I had passed, and they were very angry with the people of my Section. However, I noticed Chabot in conversation with the barber; and when I was about to leave the room, and Osselin was giving me his arm, Chabot said softly, "Citoyenne, I have some more questions to ask you. Do you know D'Orléans or *Egalité*?" I said, "Yes." "Had you not some conversation with him in the outer room before you came in here?" I said, "I merely asked him, how are you?" "And pray what did he say?" I told them that he said, "I am sorry to see you here indeed!" Chabot said, "Then it is plain that he thought and feared that you were to be examined on his account, and that he was alarmed lest you should betray him."

I now became very much alarmed and hurt, and burst into tears. He said, "We don't mind tears. I wish that we had all those which had been shed in this room—they would supply all the houses in Paris with water." He then went on, "Don't you know that D'Orléans wanted to be king, and destroy the republic?" I said, "I am sure that he never did." He said, "You know that he did: he voted for the King's death for that purpose." I said, "I wish from my soul that he never had done so; he might now be happy." "Why then did he do it?" "Because you all forced him to commit that dreadful sin." "So you think that it was a sin? You are very impudent to say so here; for we are fifty members in this room, and we all voted the death of the tyrant Capet, but not to be kings ourselves, but only to rid the world of that horrid race. And now we will see what we can do for this would-be-king, who was always turning to that gulf of liberty, England, where he is now in correspondence, and so are you. I shall not let you escape. Send her to La Force; she must go to the Tribunal; let us settle this."

About twenty of the members then got up, and said that this was not right; that they must take more information respecting me; that I should have leave to return home; that if I was a friend of Fox, I could not be a conspirator. In short, they were in a dreadful uproar about me, when Robespierre came into the room. He seemed much occupied about some event of importance, and I was dismissed till further orders.\*

#### SENSIBLE ADVICE.

EVERY unmarried lady should prepare herself, if possible, for the contingency of being one day thrown upon her own resources for happiness. Your property may take wings and fly away. Your relatives, now so fond of you, may die; or matrimonial alliances and commercial vicissitudes may remove them far from you. Your health may give way; and if it should not, advancing age will steal on and disable you for active employment. It is wise to guard, in so far as you can, against a surprise from these or any kindred evils. It is superfluous to observe that the best and only adequate shield is unaffected piety. But as a collateral reliance, there is none to be compared with books, provided one knows how to use them; and this art should be learned now. With the profusion of works on all subjects now issuing from the press, you can be at no loss to find those which will yield you equal profit and pleasure. The habit of reading, judiciously directed, will beguile many a solitary hour. It will open new and inexhaustible sources of rational enjoyment. It will indirectly, by its wise lessons and wholesome examples, fortify your trust in God, inspire you with resignation, assist you in interpreting providential dispensations, and nurture your healthful sympathies with humanity. It will enlarge your capacities of usefulness, and clothe you with attractions which will tell in the social circle beyond the fading charms of personal beauty, and the tinsel garniture of mere ball-room accomplishments. It will store away for you choice treasures which may help to solace the twilight of your days and to bring your sun to his horizon in peace.

But if general literature and mental improvement will conduce to these ends, how much more will the study of the Bible and the culture of sincere religion. There are not a few who understand this already, and who have received the covenant blessings of the gospel. Improve these blessings as you ought, and you will find that "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." Isolated you may be from some of the tenderest earthly alliances, but with God for your Father and Christ for your elder brother, you can never want a refuge in trouble nor fail of support and consolation. "The Lord bless you and keep you: the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace."†

\* From "Journal of my Life during the French Revolution," by Grace Dalrymple Elliot. London: Bentley.

† Dr. Boardman's "Bible in the Family."